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THE FUTURE OF WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNISM

ANNCR: THERE IS MUCH DISCUSSION IN THE WEST ABOUT THE FUTURE OF WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES, PARTICULARLY IN ITALY AND FRANCE. BOTH PARTIES HAVE TAKEN POSITIONS AGAINST SOVIET ORTHODOXY AND DECLARED THEY WANT TO ABIDE BY DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY RULES. BUT THE 25TH SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS HAS SHOWN THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT IS ALSO CAUSE OF MUCH CONCERN IN MOSCOW. VOA NEWS ANALYST JOHN ALBERT HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS:

VOICE: ON THE FACE OF IT, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT MOSCOW COULD EASILY OVERLOOK SOME OF THE SIGNS OF INDEPENDENCE IN WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES IN EXCHANGE FOR HAVING THEM ENTER GOVERNMENT COALITIONS WITHIN NATO COUNTRIES. BUT THIS OVERLOOKS THE FUNDAMENTAL THREAT TO SOVIET SUPREMACY IN EASTERN EUROPE SUCH A DEVELOPMENT POSES.

MOSCOW FELT IT NECESSARY TO CRUSH THE DUBCEK VERSION OF COMMUNIST INDEPENDENCE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA WITH BRUTAL FORCE, BECAUSE IT THREATENED THE BASIC DOGMA OF COMMUNIST INTERNATIONALISM AND OF COMMUNIST PARTY SUPREMACY, IN EASTERN EUROPE AND IN THE SOVIET UNION AS WELL. SOVIET LEADERS HAVE LEARNED TO LIVE WITH A ROMANIA THAT IN MANY WAYS DEFIES MOSCOW'S LEADERSHIP, BUT WHICH INTERNALLY FOLLOWS STRICTLY TO COMMUNIST PARTY SUPREMACY. A MUCH GREATER SHOCK FOR MOSCOW WAS THE LINE YUGOSLAVIA HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY FOLLOWING. AND THE SPLIT WITH PEKING HAS SERIOUSLY UNDERMINED THE SOVIET CLAIM OF LEADERSHIP IN THE WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. AFTER MANY MONTHS OF FEVERISH ATTEMPTS MOSCOW HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO CONVENE THE ALL-EUROPEAN UNITY CONFERENCE.

NO ONE COULD HAVE FOLLOWED THE DEVELOPMENTS AT THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS WITHOUT REALIZING THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE SPEECHES OF ITALIAN AND FRENCH REPRESENTATIVES WHO CLAIMED FOR THEMSELVES THE RIGHT TO AN INDEPENDENT POLICY AND WHO EVEN DARED TO CRITICIZE INTERNAL CONDITIONS IN THE SOVIET UNION. THE COVERAGE OF THE SOVIET MEDIA CAREFULLY ELIMINATED SOME OF THESE UNORTHODOX STATEMENTS FROM THE SPEECHES. IN SHORT, FAR FROM BEING A SOURCE OF COMPLACENCY FOR MOSCOW, THE STRENGTH OF WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, BE IT ON THE BASIS OF TACTICAL OR REAL CHANGE, ACUTELY EMBARRASSES THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP. THE BREZHNEV SPEECH MADE THAT QUITE CLEAR.

FOR THE WESTERN NATIONS, ON THE OTHER HAND, A MOVE OF COMMUNIST PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPE TOWARD PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT ALSO RAISES SERIOUS PROBLEMS. CAN, MANY ASK THEMSELVES, A NATO PACT, WHICH WAS FORMED IN DEFENSE AGAINST THE THREAT OF COMMUNIST AGGRESSION, SURVIVE COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENTS OF NATO MEMBERS? CAN THEIR NEWLY FOUND DEVOTION TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES BE ACCEPTED AS GENUINE OR MUST IT BE SUSPECT AS A POSSIBLE TACTICAL MANEUVER ONLY? AS THE LONDON "ECONOMIST" RECENTLY POINTED OUT, FROM THE WEST'S POINT OF VIEW THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS NOT HOW INDEPENDENT FROM MOSCOW THESE PARTIES ARE WILLING TO BE. IT IS WHETHER THEY ARE PREPARED TO PRACTICE WESTERN-TYPE DEMOCRACY AS WELL. "UNFORTUNATELY," THE ECONOMIST OBSERVES, "THERE IS NO SOLID WAY OF TESTING THEIR CLAIM TO BE CONVERTS TO DEMOCRACY."

IN DISCUSSING THIS PROBLEM IN A SPEECH IN BOSTON LAST WEEK, SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER EMPHASIZED THAT ULTIMATELY THE DECISION ON SHARING POWER WITH THE COMMUNISTS MUST BE MADE BY THE

VOTERS IN THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED. "BUT," HE ADDED, "NO ONE SHOULD EXPECT THAT THIS QUESTION IS NOT OF CONCERN TO THIS GOVERNMENT." AS THE ELECTORAL SELF-INTEREST OF THESE PARTIES COINCIDES SO OVERWHELMINGLY WITH THEIR CLAIM OF INDEPENDENCE FROM MOSCOW, THE TRUE STATE OF AFFAIRS IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE. HOWEVER, THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT, IN THEIR INTERNAL ORGANIZATION, THEY ARE STILL DEVOTED TO THEIR LENINIST PRINCIPLES AND DOGMAS WHICH CAN HARDLY BE RECONCILED WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC PARTIES.

IT MUST BE EXPECTED THAT ONCE IN POWER A WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY WOULD INEVITABLY GIVE LOW PRIORITY TO WESTERN SECURITY AND WESTERN DEFENSE EFFORTS. AND THEIR ECONOMIC ORIENTATION WOULD PROBABLY GRAVITATE MUCH MORE TOWARD THE EAST. AT BEST, A NON-ALIGNED POSTURE COULD BE EXPECTED. THIS COULD NOT HELP BUT SERIOUSLY WEAKEN, IF NOT UNDERMINE, NATO AND THE COLLECTIVE DEFENSE OF THE WEST. AND HOWEVER JUSTIFIED CONTINUED AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE BALANCE OF POWER IN EUROPE WOULD BE ON PRAGMATIC, GEOPOLITICAL GROUNDS, IT WOULD, AS DOCTOR KISSINGER CONCLUDED, "LACK THE MORAL BASE ON WHICH IT HAS STOOD FOR THIRTY YEARS."

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